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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

White House approved,
10/23/62

- EXDIS REVIEW

October 18, 1962

DATE: October 18, 1962
Time: 5:00 p. m.
White House
Part III

SUBJECT: Test Ban

PARTICIPANTS: US

The President reviewed by: Elijah Kelly Jr.
 The Secretary Date: 4-26-88 Foreign Minister Gromyko
 Ambassador Thompson Ambassador Dobrynin
 Mr. Hillenbrand Mr. Sukhodrev
 Mr. Akalovsky

COPIES TO:

S/S	INR/D-Mr. Hilsman	DOD/OSD - Secretary McNamara
G-Mr. Johnson	S/P-Mr. Rostow	DOD/ISA - Mr. Nitze
S/AL-Amb. Thompson	IO-Mr. Cleveland	White House - Mr. Bundy
EUR-Mr. Tyler	Amembassy Moscow-Amb. Kohler	
ACDA-Mr. Foster	USUN-Amb. Stevenson	
P-Mr. Manning	Amcongen Geneva for Disarmament Delegation-Amb. Dean	

Continuing to read from his prepared text.

Mr. Gromyko said he was sure the President was familiar with the Soviet Government's and Mr. Khrushchev's views on the question of the cessation of nuclear tests. He said he wished now to call the President's attention to one specific aspect of this problem. Underground tests, in addition to the objections that any nuclear tests aroused, were very costly. Apparently the US Government did not attach any significance to this fact and was willing to have US tax payers pay for them. However, frankly speaking, this path was tantamount to continuing the nuclear arms race and was leading to ever greater expenditure of the funds of the population. The Soviet Union knew what this meant, because it had tested underground. The question was why should the Soviet Union formulate its policy with respect to nuclear tests on the basis of what was convenient to the United States, which did not wish to abandon underground testing. US representatives in Geneva had tried to justify the US position by alleging that the Soviet Union had violated some moratorium. However, it was well known that a moratorium did not constitute an agreement containing obligations which states must fulfill. Furthermore, what was most important, there had not been any moratorium in existence and consequently no violation could have taken place. Indeed when the Soviet Union had ended its tests in accordance with its unilateral decision, President Eisenhower had stated that the United States was free to resume tests and to choose the moment for doing so. How then could one speak of a violation of moratorium? Mr. Gromyko continued that the Soviet Union regretted that no agreement had been reached on the test ban. The views of Mr. Khrushchev on this question, which were known to the President, were designed to facilitate agreement. The USSR

understood

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understood the situation as indicating that the US wanted to continue testing. The US was seeking ways and means of continuing the build-up of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union was against such a build-up; it was firmly in favor of reaching agreement and terminating all tests. However, since the US did not wish to come to an agreement and did not wish to end all tests, the Soviet Union would have to draw the necessary conclusions with respect to its security. No state or government in the world was more earnestly seeking agreement on the prohibition of all tests than was the Soviet Union, since the Soviet Union was fully aware of the fact that a test ban would constitute a big step in improving international relations and in improving the prospects for disarmament. If the United States also desired to achieve agreement on a test ban, then it was difficult to understand why it was placing obstacles in the path toward such an agreement.

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The President responded that it was difficult to recognize the US policy on most matters discussed today, including the test ban, from the description Mr. Gromyko had given it. The US had sought a test ban agreement for a long time and it wished to end tests. Thus any suggestion that the US was not interested in an agreement was inaccurate. We assumed that if the Soviet Union were not interested in ending tests it would not have continued to negotiate on a test ban. The US was also negotiating and we were interested in reaching agreements. We assumed Soviet good faith and the Soviet Union should not question ours. The problem today was a technical one, because there was no assurance that underground tests would not be carried out while the treaty was in force unless there were some means of verification. We had made some technical progress but no analysis he, the President, had seen had indicated there was a way of distinguishing underground nuclear tests from earthquakes on the basis of instrumentation alone. The Soviet Union had made claims to the contrary, but it had not given us any relevant scientific information. The President continued that he believed that neither of the two sides wanted to test in the atmosphere, under water, or in outer space; he also believed that neither side wanted underground tests because there was no need for such tests. He thought there must be some way of providing assurance against espionage and at the same time against underground tests. The Soviet Union had stated that it could not agree to inspection, and we had stated that we could not accept an agreement without assurances concerning underground tests. The President said he understood that there were many areas in the Soviet Union where there were no earthquakes, so he believed some satisfactory arrangements could be worked out for seismic areas, while in other areas there might be no need for inspection. Both sides should continue their efforts in good faith and seek a solution on a scientific basis.

Mr. Gromyko

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Mr. Gromyko said he took note of the President's statement that the United States was really desirous of achieving agreement on the test ban. It was good that both governments were seeking this objective. He said that he wished to take this opportunity to state again that the Soviet Union was convinced that national means were sufficient to detect any violation of a treaty with respect to underground tests, and the Soviet Union based its conviction on technical data. He also wished to point out that continuing underground tests would be of the same importance from the standpoint of nuclear arms protection and development as atmospheric, under water, and outer space tests. The Soviet Union believed that neither side was interested in the continuation of the nuclear arms race. Moreover, agreement on a ban in three environments only would not promote nondiffusion, since many states could say that they could not be asked not to acquire nuclear weapons when the present nuclear powers would not reach agreement even on a test ban.

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The President said that the two sides seem to be in disagreement concerning the scientific facts relating to distinguishing earthquakes from underground tests. He wondered why the Soviet Union could not present its scientific evaluation of this problem, and if agreement could be reached on this matter then early progress toward a test ban could be expected. It was in the interest of both the Soviet Union and the United States to find agreement on a test ban and thus to prevent proliferation. If the Soviet Union could give us adequate scientific data so that a treaty could be presented to the Senate which would give adequate assurances against underground tests, then progress could be expected. The President said he wished to invite the Soviet Union to send its scientists and to show us how a ten KT nuclear explosion in soft ground could be distinguished from an earthquake. If that could be done, agreement would come very quickly.

Mr. Gromyko responded that the Soviet Union had repeatedly stated its views on this point to US representatives, including the Secretary himself, and especially to Lord Home, who had raised this point on a number of occasions. He said he did not wish to take the President's time, but wanted to point out there had been a scientific meeting in London, in which both US and Soviet scientists had participated. The President was surely familiar with this. Frankly speaking, Soviet and British scientists had agreed that a mutually acceptable arrangement was possible regarding surveillance of over the observance of a test ban treaty. US scientists in London differed with that point of view, but only slightly. It would be good if the views expressed in London could be used to reach agreement on this matter.

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